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STATINTL

Dulles and the CIA: November v. August

President-elect Kennedy (as he was then) announced his determination to keep Allen W. Dulles as director of the Central Intelligence Agency on November 10. That was two days after the election. It was the first time Mr. Kennedy began to talk about plans. He said on the same day that J. Edgar Hoover would continue to direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that Theodore Sorensen would hold the position of counselor at the White House, and that Pierre Salinger would be press secretary.

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There was no mistaking the meaning Mr. Kennedy gave to his intention to have Mr. Dulles continue with the CIA. He observed that Mr. Dulles had served every president since Woodrow Wilson. He spoke of his post as being a non-partisan post. And he added that it was imperative that the agency should have "a continuity of stability and direction."

This was at Hyannisport. On the same day, Mr. Dulles, reading this news in Washington, said: "I am gratified that the President-elect, Mr. Kennedy, desires me to continue to serve the government in the work to which I have devoted so many years and for his expression of confidence in the Central Intelligence Agency."

That does not sound as though Mr. Dulles intended to resign or retire in a year. Nor does Mr. Kennedy's announcement sound as though Mr. Kennedy understood that Mr. Dulles would stay about a year and then step aside. The talk of both stresses continuity and stability and non-partisanship and confidence.

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It is not impossible, we recognize, that Mr. Dulles intended at that happy moment to hold on for another twelve-month or so and then call it a day. He is, as the dispatches point out, 68 years old.

It is not impossible, we say. But that is not the way it seemed then, and it is not the way it seems now. The signs point strongly to the probability that Mr. Dulles is getting out because of Cuba—lack of confidence in the White House, or lack of confidence in other quarters that count, or lack of happiness in continuing while the opinion prevails that Cuba was a bad flop and that the CIA was in serious degree responsible for its being a bad flop, or some combination of these probabilities.

One thing seems certain: the early ending of Mr. Dulles' direction of the CIA is not consistent with the attitudes of Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Dulles last November 10.